

Revelation. Thyatira- a Church needing Purity  
Revelation 2 v 18 – 29

The risen, reigning Lord Jesus has revealed Himself to the Apostle John and given him messages of comfort and challenge to seven 1<sup>st</sup> century congregations. As we read these messages we discover seven things that the Lord desires to see in every congregation in every age.

The message to Ephesus reminds us of the paramount necessity of love in our fellowship. The message to Smyrna of the need to be faithful in the face of opposition. The word to the congregation of Pergamum urges us to be loyal above all else to the truth of Christ. And today's message to the church at Thyatira reminds us of the need for holiness among God's people.

The Lord desires that His Church, like a bride, prepare ourselves to meet our Saviour Husband when He comes to bring us home with Him. Like a virgin bride dressed in spotless white, He wants His people to be holy and blameless in His sight. Christ is described here as the One with blazing eyes and feet of burnished bronze, which suggest that He sees everything and is authorised to trample down in judgement that which is wicked or offensive. This message carries a strong warning – the Lord Jesus sees all and He will judge those who refuse to change!

Now while Thyatira was not a huge notable city like Ephesus or Smyrna, the church there was growing and thriving. The Lord commends the congregation there for their love and faith, their willing service, their perseverance so that they had really progressed in faith and practice. They were a stronger, more active congregation now than they had been. So the congregation there was a good, live fellowship, in many ways pleasing to the Lord Jesus.

But there's one thing about which He in loving concern must warn them. We've all heard the proverb how 'one bad apple' can spoil a whole batch. One wrong answer makes a homework or exam result

less than perfect. One bad encounter can ruin a day otherwise filled with pleasant things. And one or two corrupt people in positions of influence can wreak havoc in a church!

In the case of Thyatira a woman was setting herself up as a teacher but her teaching was seriously flawed, blatantly encouraging members to practice immorality and get involved with idols which might steal their hearts away from Christ.

The Lord calls her 'Jezebel' and as a Jew, John would have been familiar with an Old Testament character of that name. In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings Ahab King of Israel entered into a diplomatic marriage with foreign princess Jezebel, who brought with her the idolatrous worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. These were Canaanite fertility cults, the rituals of which involved sexual perversion and abuse, very like witchcraft.

Jezebel comes across as a cruel, vindictive woman who made life extremely difficult for God's prophet Elijah. Now someone like this was exerting a wicked influence in the congregation in Thyatira and the Lord predicts trouble ahead for those who let themselves be carried along by such persuasion.

Instead members are urged to reject her teaching and hold fast to the original teaching of Christ Who taught His followers to seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness.

The Church must be open and welcoming to all kinds of people who wish to come and hear God's Word, but Christians are here cautioned about becoming too closely involved with, or giving positions of influence to people who would lead us in *unchristian, unChristlike* ways.

Once more Jesus' message to His Church comes with a promise. To those who patiently hold to Him and His teaching to the end and thus overcome the deceit of the Devil, Jesus promises two things – He will share His authority with us and give us the "morning star".

He quotes from Psalm 2 which portrays the King of Israel as a son and heir of God, exercising strong delegated authority. To those who humbly seek to practice love, faithfulness, loyalty to Christ's name and holiness as urged in these messages in Revelation, is promised more of Him and His all-surpassing authority to live and serve as children of light. In His parable of the Talents Jesus taught His followers that those who prove faithful in things here, now will be rewarded with increased responsibility in the resurrection age. Paul writing to Timothy (2 Timothy 2 v 12) says, "if we endure we will also reign with Him".

Revelation ch 22 identifies the morning star as Jesus Himself, the Lord saying, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David and the bright morning star". The coming of this Saviour King as a rising star was predicted as early as Numbers 24 v 17 in the time of Moses. But by John's day Jesus the Messiah had come and God's promises were starting to be fulfilled.

Jesus is the morning star of promise, that the dark night is coming to an end and a new day of everlasting light is dawning!

Even now, Christ wants to fill Christians with His Spirit and share His authority with us with the purpose of dispelling darkness, driving out evil and spreading the Gospel of bright new hope throughout the world. Christ, the Morning Star, promises that the very gates of Hell will not hold out against a praying, witnessing Church, faithfully practising love and holiness!

This light has come into the world in the Lord Jesus but alas! Many in the world and even in the outward Church love darkness instead of light, because their deeds are evil!

Let each one of us examine our own hearts and lives and seek the Lord's help in loving and practising these things, that nothing would be let hinder the work of the Holy Spirit and the shining of Christ, the Morning Star through our lives!

Amen

‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches’.

Let’s pray.